

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07

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FM AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6344

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 1133

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, SF

SUBJ: EGLIN, BASSON ANNOUNCE AGREEMENT TO FORM NEW PARTY

REF: PRETORIA 3332

SUMMARY: PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY AND BASSON GROUP ANNOUNCED

JULY 22 COMPLETION OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A MERGER TO FORM A

UNIFIED "VERLIGTE" (ENLIGHTENED) OPPOSITION. END SUMMARY

1. REFTEL REPORTED DECISION OF PROGRESSIVE REFORM PARTY (PRP) AND SIX FORMER UNITED PARTY MP'S LED BY JAPIE BASSON TO FORM COMMITTEE TO NEGOTIATE FORMATION OF A NEW "VERLIGTE" OPPOSITION PARTY. SPEAKING TO A PRP MEETING JULY 22 IN HIS CAPE TOWN CONSTITUENCY, PRP LEADER COLIN EGLIN, JOINED BY BASSON, TOLD AN ENTHUSIASTIC CROWD OF SOME 600-700 SUPPORTERS THAT COMMITTEE HAD AGREED TO RECOMMEND FORMATION OF NEW PARTY BASED ON KOWIE MARAIS COMMITTEE'S 14 POINTS (PRETORIA 218). RECOMMENDATIONS WILL BE CONVEYED TO PRP'S EXECUTIVE AUGUST 6 AND TO PRP FEDERAL CONGRESS IN JOHANNESBURG SEPT 5.

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2. IN PRIVATE CONVERSATION JULY 25, EGLIN TOLD CONGEN OF MAJOR POINTS OF CONTENTION HAD BEEN QUESTION OF LEADERSHIP AND STATUS OF BASSON GROUP IN NEW PARTY. ON LEADERSHIP, BASSON GROUP WOULD PREFER PROMINENT AFRIKANER ("SUCH AND PIET KOORNHOF") WHO COULD ATTRACT SIZEABLE NUMBER AFRIKANER VOTERS. IN PRESENT ABSENCE

OF SUCH FIGURE, HOWEVER, THEY "AGREED" AND INDEED "REQUESTED", THAT EGLIN REMAIN AS LEADER. WHILE SOME MORE "DOCTRINAIRE" PROGS ARGUED THAT BASSON AND COMPANY SHOULD SIMPLY BE GIVEN PRP MEMBERSHIP CARDS, EGLIN SAID DECISION WAS MADE TO ACCORD THEM SOME SPECIAL STATUS BOTH TO OBTAIN THEIR COOPERATION AND TO CREATE PUBLIC IMAGE OF A NEW AND WIDER OPPOSITION. HE SAID, IN CONFIDENCE, THAT UPON FORMATION OF NEW PARTY HE WOULD FORM A 5-6 MEMBER LEADERSHIP COUNCIL TO ADVISE HIM ON DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS WHICH WOULD INCLUDE BASSON AND ONE ASSOCIATE, PROBABLY PROF. NIC OLIVIER. EGLIN SAID BASSON GROUP ALSO ARGUED STRONGLY FOR NEW NAME TO INDICATE THAT NEW GROUPING WAS NOT JUST AN EXPANDED PRP. HE SAID MATTER WAS STILL UNDER CONSIDERATION BUT MOST LIKELY OUTCOME WAS THAT, TO PROVIDE CONTINUITY AND MINIMIZE LIKELIHOOD OF CONFUSING VOTERS, "PROGRESSIVE" TAG WOULD BE RETAINED WITH SOME OTHER ADDITION, PROGRESSIVE VERLIGTE ALLIANCE AND PROGRESSIVE REFORM CONVENTION PARTY WERE AMONG NAMES SUGGESTED TO DATE.

3. EGLIN SAID THAT ON QUESTION OF FUTURE POLITICAL DISPENSATION, NEW PARTY'S POLICY STATEMENT WILL RETAIN CERTAIN PRINCIPLES SUCH AS ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION, "FULL CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS" FOR ALL, BILL OF RIGHTS AND STRONG JUDICIARY, AVOIDANCE OF DOMINATION OF ONE GROUP BY ANOTHER AND LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DECENTRALIZATION OF POWER WITHIN A FEDERAL FRAMEWORK. RATHER THAN ELABORATE ON DETAILS OF FUTURE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE, HOWEVER, NEW PARTY'S POLICY WILL EMPHASIZE THAT DETAILS SHOULD BE NEGOTIATED AT A CONVENTION REPRESENTING ALL ELEMENTS OF SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY (CAPE TOWN 1050).

4. ON THE POSSIBILITY OF WINNING ADDITIONAL MP'S FROM FORMER UP (NOW NRP) EGLIN SAID BASSON GROUP HAD HOPED TO BRING WITH THEM WALLY KINGWILL, WARRICK WEBBER AND HARLAN BELL, ALL FROM EASTERN CAPE, BUT AT THIS POINT HE THOUGHT THERE WOULD HAVE TO BE "FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS, INCLUDING ELECTORAL PRESSURE" BEFORE ADDITIONAL DEFECTIONS LIKELY. EGLIN WAS CONFIDENT OF PRP CHANCES OF WINNING HILLBROW SEAT BEING VACATED BY DR. GIDEAON JACOBS AND, IN NEXT GENERAL ELECTION, OF PICKING UP SEVERAL FORMER UP SEATS IN CAPE AND TRANSVAAL. WHITE

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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